

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-22. (Cancelled)

23. (New) A contents management system in which a playback device plays an encrypted content stored on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management device, comprising:

the management device, holds the decryption key for decrypting the encrypted
5 content in correspondence with disclosure information relating to disclosure of the encrypted content, refers to the disclosure information and judges, when a request is received from the playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and transmits the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted, wherein the management device stores, as disclosure information, period information showing at least one of
10 a disclosure start date and a disclosure end date, and judges whether disclosure of the content is permitted according to the period information;

the management device includes:

a key storage unit storing the decryption key;

a disclosure information storage unit storing the period information as disclosure
15 information;

a disclosure judging unit operable to receive the request from the playback device, and to refer to the period information and judge whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted; and

a key transmitting unit operable, if judged that disclosure is permitted, to transmit
20 the decryption key to the playback device;

the portable recording medium stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key; and

the playback device reads from the recording medium and executes the key request program, receives the decryption key from the management device, reads from the recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content using the decryption key, and plays the decrypted content, wherein playback device includes:

a key request program executing unit operable to read from the recording medium and execute the key request program;

a key receiving unit operable to receive the decryption key from the management device;

a content reading unit operable to read the encrypted content from the recording medium; and

a playback unit operable to decrypt the encrypted content using the decryption key and playback the decrypted content.

24. (New) The contents management system of claim 23 wherein the key request program authenticates a user.

25. (New) The contents management system of claim 23 wherein the portable recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a compact disk.

26. (New) The contents management system of claim 23 wherein the portable recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a DVD.

27. (New) The contents management system of claim 24 wherein the management device determines if a key requested by the key request program should be sent to the content reading unit based on one or more predetermined criteria.

28. (New) A contents management system in which a playback device plays an encrypted content stored on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management device, comprising:

the management device, holds the decryption key for decrypting the encrypted
5 content in correspondence with disclosure information relating to disclosure of the encrypted content, refers to the disclosure information and judges, when a request is received from the playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and transmits the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted, wherein the management device stores, as disclosure information, period information showing at least one of
10 a disclosure start date and a disclosure end date, and judges whether disclosure of the content is permitted according to the period information;

the portable recording medium stores the encrypted content encrypted using an encryption key and a key request program for requesting the management device for the decryption key;

15 the playback device, reads from the recording medium and executes the key request program, receives the decryption key from the management device, reads from the recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content using the decryption key, and plays the decrypted content; and

a manager device used by a manager of the system, wherein

20 the manager device receives update information used for updating the period information and transmits the received update information to the management device, and

 the management device receives the update information from the manager device and updates the period information according to the received update information.

29. (New) The contents management system of claim 28 wherein the key request program authenticates a user.

30. (New) The contents management system of claim 28 wherein the recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a compact disk.

31. (New) The contents management system of claim 28 wherein the recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a DVD.

32. (New) The contents management system of claim 28 wherein the management device determines if a key requested by the key request program should be sent to the content reading unit using based on one or more predetermined criteria.

33. (New) A contents management system in which a playback device plays an encrypted content stored on a portable recording medium, using a decryption key acquired from a management device, comprising:

 the management device, holds the decryption key for decrypting the encrypted
5 content in correspondence with disclosure information relating to disclosure of the encrypted content, refers to the disclosure information and judges, when a request is received from the playback device, whether disclosure of the encrypted content is permitted, and transmits the decryption key to the playback device if judged that disclosure is permitted, wherein the

management device stores, as disclosure information, period information showing at least one of
10 a disclosure start date and a disclosure end date, and judges whether disclosure of the content is
permitted according to the period information;

the portable recording medium, stores the encrypted content encrypted using an
encryption key, and a key request program for requesting the management device for the
decryption key;

15 the playback device, reads from the recording medium and executes the key
request program, receives the decryption key from the management device, reads from the
recording medium and decrypts the encrypted content using the decryption key, and plays the
decrypted content; and

a manager device used by a manager of the system, wherein

20 the management device, on receipt of a request from the playback device,
generates historical information that includes a user identifier which uniquely identifies a user
using the playback device, and a content identifier which uniquely identifies the encrypted
content, and stores the generated historical information,

the manager device receives an historical information request for transmission of
25 historical information stored by the management device, and transmits the received historical
information request to the management device, and

the management device receives the historical information request from the
manager device, reads the stored historical information and transmits the read historical
information to the manager device.

34. (New) The contents management system of claim 33 wherein the key request program authenticates a user.

35. (New) The contents management system of claim 33 wherein the recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a compact disk.

36. (New) The contents management system of claim 34 wherein the recording medium having the key request program and the encrypted content is a DVD.

37. (New) The contents management system of claim 34 wherein the management device determines if a key requested by the key request program should be sent to the content reading unit using based on one or more predetermined criteria.